

DEATH OF A BOHEMIAN

Has CIA Killed Anti-Castro Mag?

Bohemia Libre, sensational anti-Castro weekly magazine, has quit publishing and some say the CIA blew the whistle on it. At any rate, publication has been "suspended." For how long, nobody knows; it may be forever.

Reports from Miami's Cuban colony are that the Central Intelligence Agency had been subsidizing it, and a couple of weeks ago, got tired. CIA itself doesn't care to discuss rumors.

Bohemia, one of the most spectacular and successful Spanish language periodicals in the Western Hemisphere when it was published in its palatial plant in Havana, idolized Castro both before and after he took over Cuba.

FERVID SUPPORT

During Bohemia's Havana days, its odd-ball publisher, Don Miguel Angel Quevedo, from his exotic modern office panelled in rare woods (complete with lavish washroom with lavender bidet) directed uncritical and fervid support for whatever Fidel said or did.

Bohemia gave U. S. newsmen covering Cuba — such as the famous Latin America reporter Jules duBois of the Chicago Tribune — the hero treatment as long as they sympathized with Castro's revolution. When they became disillusioned, Bohemia "exposed" the same U. S. reporters as "spies," "agents," and "Colonels in the CIA."

Finally Castro's Red-glared eyes covetously focussed on Bohemia's expensive printing plant and Publisher Quevedo packed his bags and barely made the plane.

So he joined the exiles.

"Bohemia" thus became "Bohemia Libre" in exile and in sheer vitriol outdid all other Castro critics (no mean feat, these days).

IRONY

It is an irony, say Cuban exiles, that Bohemia now is portrayed in the very role it accused U. S. newsmen of playing: "agent" of the CIA.

There's no doubt that Bohemia Libre's spectacular format and content — it's a sort of hot-licks, Police Gazette version of Life Magazine — made effective propaganda in several Caribbean areas, as well as among Cuban exiles in the U. S., at least until the Bay of Pigs disaster in April, 1961.

There is also no doubt that since then, it has been not so sharp a tool. But, there is also no doubt that the Red propagandists in Havana would crow over its final demise.

Here are several versions of why Bohemia hasn't been going to press recently:

1. — A cartoon of the Kennedy family scheduled for Page 1 on January 1, was so insulting that the CIA lowered the boom.

2. — That knowledge of CIA support had leaked so that it had ruined the magazine's effectiveness.

3. — That the magazine has simply lost its effectiveness anyway, since the groups it supported lost the Bay of Pigs battle.

4. — That if the actual size of the CIA's subsidy of Bohemia Libre got into the hands of Congress, it would embarrass the Kennedy Administration — and the CIA — just about as thoroughly as the Bay of Pigs disaster itself.

5. — White House adviser Arthur Schlesinger found Bohemia Libre "too conservative," according to one of the magazine's editorial workers, who also said there were "financial problems."

According to this magazine's editor, Bohemia Libre furnished a U. S. Senator with proof of the Russian build-up in Cuba and that didn't help with the Administration, either. The Senator he named is presently a Democrat.

A BILLION

As to the size of the alleged subsidy, depending on who's talking, it's spent more than \$100 million dollars on Bohemia in a couple of years, or

paid just the office rent — \$2400 a month.

Bohemia Libre may not be as dead as its recent failures to publish indicate. Bohemia's boss and staff are well known as lively and resourceful people among such interests as sugar, rum and various export firms — and recently

Publisher Quevedo was in Puerto Rico reportedly trying to interest the "statehood-for-Puerto Rico" group. Mr. Quevedo also has his eye on certain interests in the Dominican Republic and in Venezuela as possible angels.

So far, reports have it: no angels are flying.